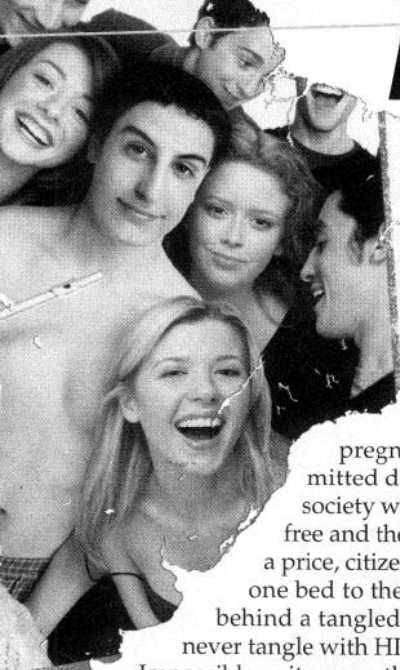


All Sowing, No Reaping

Racy Flicks Use Sex Without Consequences to Attract Young Audiences



Try to imagine a world virtually void of abortion, unwed

pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. In this detached society where "free love" is really free and the promiscuous never pay a price, citizens jump shamelessly from one bed to the next. They may leave behind a tangled sexual history, but they never tangle with HPV, chlamydia or herpes.

Impossible as it seems, this district exists, and it's closer to home than you might think. Where is this place? Your local cinema.

Sexual Ethics, Hollywood Style

➤ Last year, DreamWorks described its hormonally preoccupied teen flick *Road Trip* as follows: "When you're in a committed relationship and have sex with another person, it's not cheating if you're in different area codes. It's not cheating if you're too wasted to remember it... But it is definitely cheating if you videotape it and accidentally mail the tape to your girlfriend."

That pretty much sums up Hollywood's view of teen sexuality. Sex is reduced to a recreational activity—even a spectator sport. Drunkenness excuses promiscuity. Partners needn't tell each other that they're having sex with other people. And it's not just *Road Trip*. The \$100 million-grossing high school romp *American Pie* views sex as a rite of passage to be achieved by any means necessary (a sequel is due in August). In *Heartbreakers*, sex is a tool for manipulation. *Tomcats* strings together one lurid scene after another to prove that sexual conquest validates manhood. Even in "sweet" romances such as *The Wedding Planner*, *Save the Last Dance* and *Someone Like You*, intercourse is just a normal part of dating, engagement and Hollywood's commitment-free alternative to marriage, cohabitation.

What's missing here? Consequences. Almost nobody in films like these ends up pregnant. Even fewer contract an STD even though, by real-life standards, their lifestyles are a medical disaster waiting to happen. James Bond would be a walking virus. Of course, what teen would pay to see *Dude, Where's My Car?* if they thought the characters might wind up suffering from open sores or discussing incurable viruses?

Is Hollywood Under Quarantine?

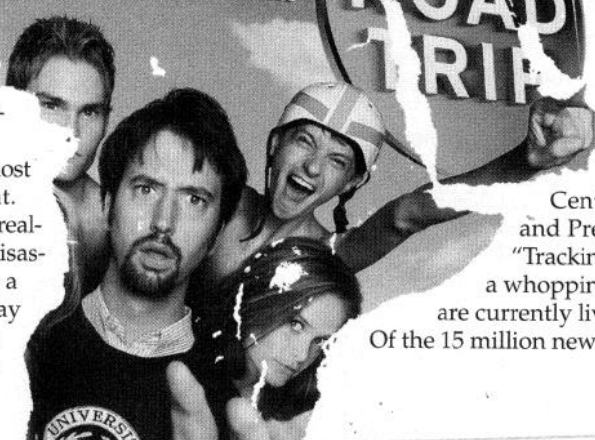
Perhaps filmmakers' reluctance to mention STDs in teen flicks simply reflects a squeamishness about portraying diseases in general. Not likely. Motion pictures often tug heartstrings by inflicting illnesses on characters. Cancer. Heart attacks. Mental disorders. Diabetes. The recent films *Autumn in New York* and *Sweet November* even use terminal illness as an excuse for afflicted women to throw caution to the wind, sexually.

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Clearly, Hollywood has no problem using health crises in stories; it just shies away from politically incorrect ones—like STDs—that don't serve its purposes. It would seem the only time people onscreen contract diseases such as AIDS is when filmmakers want to champion a social agenda, as they did in 1993 with the critically acclaimed *Philadelphia*. Yet, despite being a high-profile virus of great concern to the industry's creative community, none of the promiscuous adolescents in teen sex comedies ever seems to encounter it. There really is "a time and a place for everything" and, in this case, both are carefully chosen by Hollywood to support the priority of the moment.

the greatest college tradition of all.

ROAD TRIP



The Truth About STDs

The truth is, adopting the entertainment industry's mentality for ignoring the risks of casual sex is like playing Russian Roulette. According to last year's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study "Tracking the Hidden Epidemics," a whopping 65 million Americans are currently living with incurable STDs. Of the 15 million new cases reported each year,

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about one-fourth are among teenagers. Even so, the report states, "Despite the fact that STDs are extremely widespread, have severe and sometimes deadly consequences and add billions of dollars to the nation's healthcare costs each year, most people in the United States remain unaware of the risks and consequences of all but the most prominent STD—the human immunodeficiency virus or HIV."

This narrow view creates a false sense of security. Indeed, STDs are exploding. Even many diseases not currently considered "on the rise" still carry the label "epidemic." And population groups not stereotypically categorized as "high risk" (such as women and young people) are becoming infected in record numbers.

So, what's the answer? Not condom use. So-called "safer sex" indoctrination aside, condoms are *not* preventing the spread of these diseases. And as we've already determined, teens won't learn the truth about sexually transmitted disease in theaters. They need to learn it at home. In church. From adults who care about more than just selling them a movie ticket.

The medical community, led by the CDC, is producing informative new studies that will help parents, teachers and youth

leaders shoot straight with kids.* For a Christian emphasis on abstinence and STDs, adults can access data online from The Medical Institute at www.medinstitute.org. With the help of compelling clinical evidence, families can reinforce the fact that

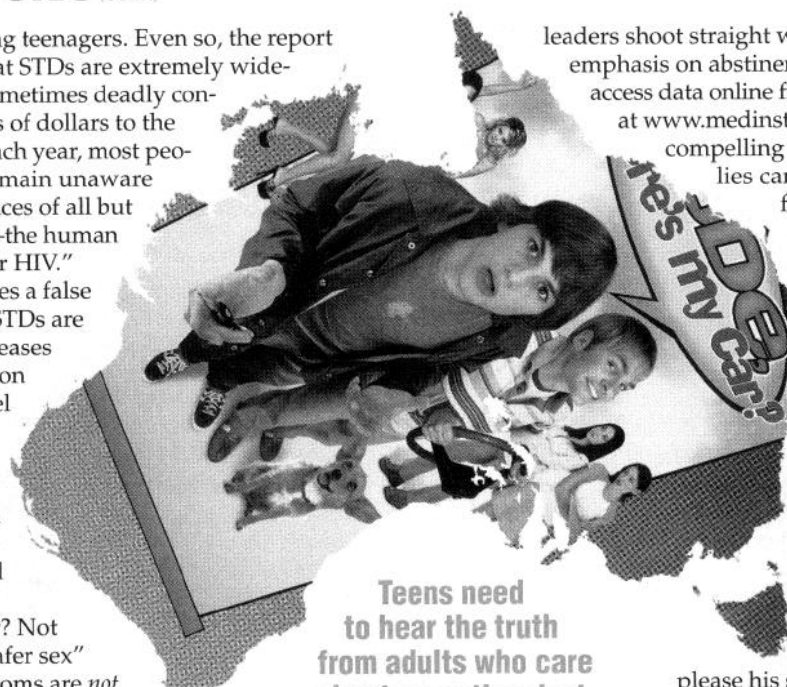
following God's plan of self-control *before* marriage and exclusivity *within* it is the only way to truly prevent life-altering consequences that are emotional, spiritual... and physical.

Knowing the proclivities of the human heart, the Apostle Paul warns in Galatians 6:7-8, "Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to

please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." Hol-

lywood *also* understands the human heart, and will continue to appeal to its least virtuous instincts. —by *Lindy Beam*

*To gain access to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, log on to www.cdc.gov/nchstp/dstd/dstdp.html



Teens need to hear the truth from adults who care about more than just selling them a movie ticket.

Adolescents

need to understand the truth and consequences associated with STDs. Here are three common infectious diseases which can be contracted through various

sexual behaviors:

(HPV)

Human Papillomavirus

- Twenty million Americans currently suffer from one in this group of viruses, identified by numbers.
- According to the CDC, fully 75 percent of the reproductive-age population has been infected with sexually transmitted HPV at one time or another.
- College students who have had more than four sexual partners are almost certain to be infected.
- Lately, HPV has led to heightened public concern because studies have shown that it is the cause of more than 80 percent of cervical cancers.

Chlamydia

- The most commonly reported infectious disease in the U.S.
- In the United States alone, there are 3 million new cases reported each year.
- In some regions, *one in ten* sexually active teen girls is infected.
- Can be treated with antibiotics, but since 75 percent of women and half of men with chlamydia don't show symptoms, it is often left untreated.
- Women suffer most from consequences of chlamydia, which include Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), infertility and serious birth defects.

Genital Herpes

- Genital herpes currently infects 45 million Americans, with one million new cases reported each year.
- Inflicts many of its sufferers with painful red ulcers. The sores can be treated, but the disease is incurable.
- At least 50 percent of those who test positive don't know they're infected.
- Though doctors used to believe genital herpes could be transmitted only when sores were present, this view has been proven false.
- Between the 1970s and the 1990s, this disease increased fastest among Caucasian Americans ages 12-19.